

Viewpoint

STREET TALK

What can the Army do to make life easier for military children?



Spc. Marjorie Brooks
585th Engr. Co.

"Maintain strong relationships between the installation and the school districts."



Master Sgt. Michael Gaskey
HHC, I Corps



Capt. Jamie Smith
25th BSB

"A military van, complete with child safety seats and strollers, should be available to pick up new families at the airport and take them directly to post."



Pvt. Matthew Smith
1st Bn., 5th Inf. Regt.



"I don't have children, but I have a friend who does, and what she needs is a place to take her when her spouse is deployed so she can enjoy an evening out."

Alanna Mitchell
Family member

"Offer free or low-cost child care where we can drop our children off for a couple hours when our husbands are deployed, so we can run errands."



Ruth Platter
Family member

Army offers Soldiers a life worth living



Editor's note: The central message for March is retaining the force. In February, Street Talk asked members of the Fort Lewis community about their questions and suggestions. Here are the command general's responses

By Lt. Gen. Jim Dubik

I Corps and Fort Lewis commanding general

I am writing to you this month about building tomorrow's Army.

Have you ever asked your chain of command why they've stayed? Why they've devoted 25, 30, 30-plus years to our way of life? Well, I've been in the Army for 35 years. And I'll tell you some of the reasons I've stayed.

We have a tremendous opportunity to grow professionally and personally, to expand our horizons. We stayed, at least I think, to raise our families in an environment where values count.

We have a life worthy of envy. Your hometown friends envy the kind of things that you do. They may not tell you this, but they do envy you.

When you go to talk to your hometown buddies, talk to them about the things you have done and the places that you have seen. Your experiences are unmatched — unless there is another veteran in the room.

We stay in the Army because it is a life worth living.

I've read many good comments and recommendations this month in the Northwest Guardian about reenlisting.

One Soldier suggested more time for education. We have a reenlistment incentive here at Fort Lewis that includes education. This is tough, I know, because of the operational tempo that we have. It is difficult with the kinds of missions that we have going. But we have that education opportunity and I encourage you to talk to your chain of command about it.

We do have bonus dollars for Soldiers, and, yes, they are tied to the Army's needs and other qualifiers. To get information about reenlisting, talk to your reenlistment NCO. More important, talk to your chain of command and ask them about your future.

A few Soldiers voiced some concerns about multiple deployments. We're a nation at war; deployments are a reality for all of us. All of us would prefer to have a lower optempo.

Our greatest generation fought for three and a half years, and we've been at war for four and a half. You know, it's our turn now. They answered their call to duty; we're answering ours.

We know we are making a difference in our country and in the countries in which we operate. We're giving people things that no one else can give them

— freedom, opportunity, hope.

The bonds among ourselves, members of the Army, the esprit de corps and camaraderie that we share is matchless in any other kind of employment. Talk to your civilian buddies about that.

The kind of places in which we live are among people with whom we share values. We can raise our children in places where, if they are riding their bikes around, they're safe. A lot of your buddies can't say that.

You may be surprised to hear what your chain of command says about the Army.

Most of us don't stay because of free medical care, or dental care, or 30 days of leave.

Our Army leaders answered the call to duty and they stay because they enjoy what they do. They, like me, enjoy the environment that we live in. They live by the values that we all share; we're connected to something greater than ourselves.

We don't just read about history;

we're part of history; we make history.

And, yes, retaining quality warriors is a leadership responsibility. So we want leaders to stay in our Army. Command Sgt. Maj. Tommy Williams and I will do our part to make sure that we reenlist those Soldiers who will make tomorrow's Army as great as it is today. And I know the entire chain of command here at Fort Lewis will do the same.

So talk to your chain of command and call the retention office at 967-2769. As mission allows, any member of the chain of command will take part in your reenlistment ceremony and make you part of tomorrow's Army.

Staying in the Army is the right choice.

You know I've never met anyone who has stayed and regretted it. Show your Soldiers that you care about their future and the future of our Army.

Join me in asking our great Soldiers to build the Army of tomorrow by reenlisting.

Our Army leaders answered the call to duty and they stay because they enjoy what they do. They, like me, enjoy the environment that we live in. They live by the values that we all share; we're connected to something greater than ourselves. We don't just read about history; we make history.

LOOKING BACK



Courtesy of the Fort Lewis Military Museum

Fort Lewis Soldiers line up for an inspection during the early days of World War II. The equipment in 1942 was different, but the drill was the same.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

MARCH 10	MARCH 11	MARCH 12	MARCH 13	MARCH 14	MARCH 15	MARCH 16
1969: JAMES EARL RAY PLEADS GUILTY TO KILLING MARTIN LUTHER KING JR	1779: U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS ESTABLISHED	1993: JANET RENO IS SWORN IN AS THE FIRST FEMALE U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL	1942: ULIA FLIKKE, ARMY NURSE CORPS, BECOMES FIRST WOMAN COLONEL IN THE ARMY	1991: EMIR OF KUWAIT RETURNS TO KUWAIT CITY, AFTER THE IRAQIS ARE EXPELLED	1864: RED RIVER CAMPAIGN: UNION FORCES REACH ALEXANDRIA, LA.	1802: U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY IS ESTABLISHED AT WEST POINT

CHAPEL SERVICES

Catholic Masses

Weekdays (except Tuesdays and DONSA's), 11:50 a.m. — Main Post Chapel, Building 2001, 967-4849

Weekdays, 11:45 a.m. — Madigan Chapel, MAMC, 968-1120

Saturdays, 4:30 p.m. — Madigan Chapel, MAMC

Saturdays, 5 p.m. — ROTC Chapel, North Fort Lewis

Sundays, 8 a.m. — Main Post Chapel

Sundays, 9 a.m. — Madigan Chapel

Sundays, 9:30 a.m. — Main Post Chapel

Sundays, noon — Evergreen Chapel Building 3238, 967-7186

Orthodox services

Sundays, 9 a.m. — Four Chaplains Memorial Chapel, Building 9120

Jewish services

Fridays, 7 p.m. — Chapel 5, Building 2270, 967-6590

Liturgical services

Sundays, 9 a.m. — Soldiers Chapel, Building 3799, 967-7151

Protestant services

Sundays, 11 a.m. — Main Post Chapel

Sundays, 9:30 a.m. — Four Chaplains Memorial Chapel, Building 9120

Sundays, 10 a.m. — Evergreen Chapel

Sundays, 10:30 a.m. — Madigan Chapel

Sundays, 11 a.m. — Soldiers Chapel

Sundays, 11:15 a.m. — Four Chaplains

Wiccan

Saturdays, 6 p.m. — Building 6195

LDS

For LDS services information, call Lt. Col. (Ret.) Andy Raymond at 582-8776.

Army parents need to take advantage of every moment

By David W. Kuhns Sr.
Northwest Guardian

What's the hardest thing for the children of Soldiers to face? Not having their parents there.

That's an obvious answer for most people who live in and around the Army.

It's ironic. I think that one of the things Soldier families do best is parent — but duty takes them away from their children. In society at large, most parents have plenty of opportunity to be with their children — but they too often turn their backs on their responsibilities.

Growing up as an "Army brat" has always been different from childhood for other Americans. But the challenges, in the past, were seen as offshoots of frequent moves. Making new friends, adapting to new schools, feeling a sense of belonging — those were the special problems faced by military children.

But military families made up for all those moves by staying involved in their children's lives. Nowhere do grade school concerts, PTA meetings or Little League ball games draw bigger crowds than on or around military bases.

Now, as Soldiers serve repeated tours in what is being termed the long war, the Army has lengthened the time families are able to stay at one assignment — but the requirements of the Army's missions are taking parents away from what they do best — parent.

Members of the Armed Forces have always been called upon to make sacrifices. Selfless service is, after all, one of the Army's core values. But, as the Army has become more professional, more Soldiers are married. Duty now demands sacrifice not just from those in uniform, but from their families, as well.

There is no way to make up that lost time. You can't Tivo a birthday party, a game-winning score, or your daughter's first formal dance. Modern advantages like e-mail and Web cameras can never replace a parent's hug or a game of catch in the back yard.

So the best you can do is take full advantage of the time you have. Never miss a chance to share your children's lives, to pass on your values and wisdom. Give them everything you can now. That's the best way to prepare them for the sacrifices you know they will make in the future.



Commanding general Lt. Gen. Jim M. Dubik
Public Affairs officer Lt. Col. Daniel Williams
Command Information officer James W. Symmonds
Editor David W. Kuhns Sr.
Layout and design Scott Hansen
Senior writers Bob Reinert
Barbara L. Sellers
Photojournalist Jason Kaye

To suggest story ideas or submit copy for the Northwest Guardian, call the Command Information Section at (253) 967-0171 or (253) 967-0173 or come to the newspaper office in Building 2025, Fort Lewis, WA 98433-9500. Stories may also be e-mailed to the editor at NWGEEditor@thenewstribune.com. Deadline is Friday before publication.

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